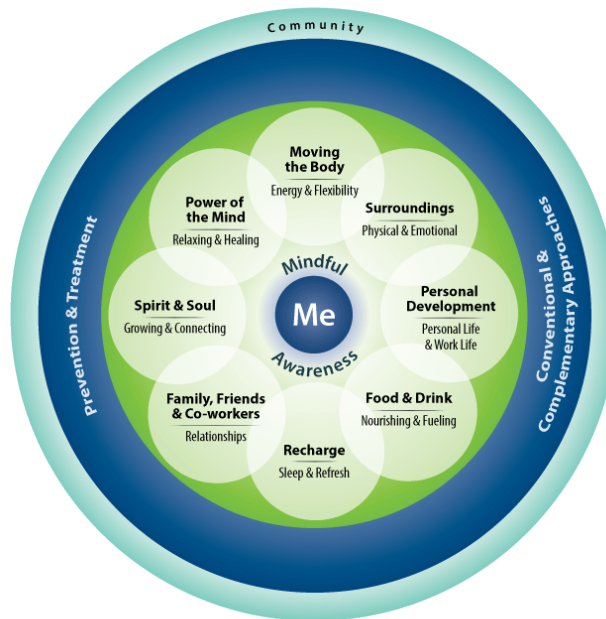


Whole Health During a Pandemic

Life has always been a process of evolving & adapting to change. With the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Pandemic, we are still going through these normal life changes – just at a faster rate than usual. Under stress, people can swing between extremes, like pretending everything is normal or believing that the world is catastrophically ending. Another spectrum is “me against the world” or doing everything you can for the good of others. We need to find a balance between the extremes to get through this together.



“Do the Five” for Health recommendation with COVID-19 (Coronavirus):

- 1 HANDS Wash them often
- 2 ELBOW Cough into it
- 3 FACE Don't touch it
- 4 FEET Stay more than 6 feet apart
- 5 FEEL sick? Stay home

The Five to Thrive During a Pandemic:

Pick 5 things you can do when you start to feel stressed:

1. Take a deep breath, do some focused breathing or meditation,
<https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/veteran-resources/MobileApps-OnlineTools.asp>
2. Nurture yourself – make a nice meal, take a walk, take a break, get a cup of tea/coffee
3. Stay informed, but don't obsess, take a media break for an hour or two
4. Prepare – make a list of what you would need if you were at home for 2 weeks

5. Stay connected inside & out
 - a. Inner: meditation, yoga, tai chi, journaling, prayer (see link above)
 - b. Outer: video chat, email, text a friend you haven't connected with for awhile
6. Find and cultivate sources of hope & positivity – books, quotes, videos, uplifting stories
7. Balance searching for the negative with looking for the positive – find positive things for yourself and share with others
8. Laugh – watch a comedy, watch funny cat videos
9. Have compassion for yourself and others – this is a difficult and stressful time, and everyone is doing the best they can
10. Look for healthy things to do on the VA Whole Health website: <https://www.va.gov/wholehealth/>
11. Start a workbook like *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron or a drawing/coloring book
12. Learn a new skill or language, take an online class
13. Read a book or magazine
14. Listen to music you like, maybe even dance and sing along
15. Journal – daily journaling has shown health benefits
16. Practice your faith, religion, or spiritual practices
17. Look at the big picture – many people have lived through wars and plagues throughout history, we just happen to be living in a piece of history now
18. Take a walk or do an exercise routine at home (search online for ideas)
19. Fill out a Personal Health Inventory and pick something to work on the next week that is health promoting, <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/phi.asp>
20. Browse through the Whole Health Library for ideas to use for your health, well-being, and resilience, <https://wholehealth.wisc.edu/>

Five to Thrive During a Pandemic:

Once you have your 5 different health promotion ideas, one for each finger, there is a mindful awareness process you can do.

Wash or sanitize your hands mindfully: focus on what you are doing, feel your hands and fingers as you rub and massage them until your hands are completely dry (You can do mindful sanitizing as a way to take a breath and a break throughout the day).

Hold out your hand. Say out loud, or to yourself, your first health promotion idea and trace from the tip of your thumb back up your arm, and all the way to your heart. Say out loud, or to yourself, your second health promotion idea and trace from the tip of your index finger back up your arm and all the way to your heart. Do this for each finger, for each of your five health promotion ideas. If you like the way that feels, think of five more for your other hand. This mindful awareness exercise helps bring your focus out of your worrying mind and into your body and into practical things that you can do for your health, even during a pandemic – especially during a pandemic.

April 2020